

CALFED Public Meeting
9/08/99

I am a licensed sport fishing guide and I work the waters of the Sacramento/San Joaquin rivers and Delta system. The health of the rivers and delta system is of great importance to me. I have watched the steady deterioration of the riparian habitat and the precipitous decline of the fisheries for the last 40 years. It is time for change, we can no longer stand by and sacrifice what is left of economically important fisheries to the greed of corporate agri-businesses. The Calfed draft EIS/EIR and the preferred alternative do not lend one confidence that there will be any change for the good. What I gather from reading the three alternatives is that their goals are to export more water from the delta. We all know that water exports are what has destroyed the delta and its tributaries. The way to restore the system and stop further destruction **IS NOT** by planning to export more water. In all fairness I think that calfed should go back to the table and discuss a fourth alternative which should have a stronger focus on water conservation, underground water storage and retirement of all marginal croplands, thereby reducing water exports and increasing natural delta out flow. The idea that water flowing freely through an estuary is "wasted" unless it is flowing on to some corporate farmers field is founded on greed, not rational thinking!! If it were not for the subsidies granted the large land owners that underwrite the true costs of the water, entities like the Westlands irrigation District or the Kern County Water District could not exist. Without the subsidies the crops grown would go back to parts of the country where the economics work and a huge burden would be lifted from the backs of the taxpayers and the environment. Salt build up in soils and drainage water that is poisonous to most forms of life are problems caused by irrigation of lands that should have never been brought into production, for any reason. Those that have lined their pockets with taxpayer's money now want the same taxpayers to build them a nice big drain to carry their poisonous leach water back down to the delta that we are proposing to save. Does any one remember Kesterson??? There are those that think wildlife enhancement is a duck with three beaks and four feet. **WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE??** Think about it!! Calfed needs to correct the inequities of the past and present. More emphasis is needed on eliminating the massive subsidies that foster waste, also emphasize metering residential and urban water use in the central valley, thus encouraging real water conservation. Reject the idea of destructive dam building and promote groundwater storage instead. Make retirement of marginal lands a larger priority. Dedicate more water to in stream use for fishery and riparian habitat restoration. It is time for the bureaucrats to accept their responsibility for proper management of public trust waters and wildlife.

The following is a list of comments on issues that are not specifically addressed in the draft EIS/EIR and the preferred alternative and should be incorporated in an alternative plan. Without addressing these issues I feel that the plan cannot and will not succeed in its stated mission. Therefore I would like my following comments on the Calfed Draft EIS/EIR and the preferred alternative entered into the public record.

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- * Require within a reasonable time frame (2-5yrs) strict water conservation measures to be implemented by all landowners with more than 160 acres under irrigation. One only needs to look at what modern irrigation technology has done for Israel to see what can be done.
- * Require water meters on all residential services in California.
- * Require payment of full cost of power and irrigation water received. This should encourage some real conservation effort and stop the tendency to develop more and more arid soils, which in turn increases demand for water.
- * Require water saved by water conservation, recycling, groundwater management, or water developed from the creation of alternative water supplies be used to reduce the amount of water exported from the Delta. All additional water saved and or developed should be dedicated to environmental restoration of the estuary.
- * Retire and return to natural vegetation, all lands underlain with clay drainage barrier and subject to salt build up, at no cost to the taxpayer.
- * Provide an assessment of how much water it will take to establish a healthy, self-sustaining restored ecosystem and fisheries.
- * Quantify the amount of water that will be needed to restore the estuary and its fisheries to the levels that existed during the past fifty years and to make the restoration of the public fisheries (nearly destroyed by water development and export from the estuary) an objective of the process.
- * Provide appropriate assurances that this water will be supplied to the estuary. A creditable water acquisition plan needs to be developed with implementation assurances so the estuary and its fisheries get the water they need. Without this water the productive work that went into the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan will be of little value in terms of meeting its objectives.
- * Require that all the tributaries to the Bay-Delta supply a fair and equitable share of their water to the Delta's water supply and to Delta outflow.
- * Require all water pollution including agricultural run off with mineral salt content to be stopped at its source and to establish and enforce water quality standards that actually protect the entire food web of the estuary and its tributaries (much of the pollution is so toxic that it kills or keeps a substantial part of the lower food web from developing. This in turn reduces the overall productivity of the estuary). **NO SAN LUIS DRAIN!!**

*** Establish the necessary assurance that: the Environmental Water Account will be run to restore the estuary, an appropriate baseline of flows should be determined so that EWA flows will be additive to existing flows and not merely replacement flows, assurance that these flows won't be just a smoke screen for additional water to be exported out of the estuary further subsidizing water costs to private businesses should be included.**

*** Set a sufficient steelhead restoration objective. While the historic data is sparse, we do know that Central Valley steelhead populations once exceeded those of salmon. Therefore, the 40,000 steelhead goal should be just an interim objective. CALFED's long-term goal in the EIS-R and in the ERPP should be the restoration of the steelhead resource, and the document should be so modified. The Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan does not provide sufficient cold water summer flows temperatures in Central Valley rivers for Steelhead. The ERPP / EIR-S should be revised to ensure water temperatures are adequate for steelhead restoration.**

*** Provide adequate flows and affirmative actions to restore the striped bass fishery which has been devastated by water export from the estuary. The restoration of this public resource should be on a coequal basis with other of the estuary's fishery resources. While such actions will need to be closely coordinated with the restoration efforts for salmon and steelhead to ensure compatibility, it is imperative that this fishery be provided the flows required to restore its spawning success and the survival of young fish in the spring and summer. The Delta outflow required to carry these young fish away from the state and federal pumping plants in the Southern Delta must be provided on an annual basis so their entrainment can be substantially reduced.**

Submitted by:
Michael McKenzie
14 Echo Court
Pleasant Hill Ca. 94523